

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-33 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3, 5-11, and 13-33 are amended. No new matter is added.

### **35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejection**

The Office Action rejects claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for containing asserted informalities. Applicants believe that this rejection is overcome with the above amendments to claims 1-3, 5-11 and 13-33. Should the Examiner believe that any additional informalities exist, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to discuss any such asserted informalities. Otherwise, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are respectively requested.

### **35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection**

The Office Action rejects claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over "the admitted prior art" in view of Nickerson (U.S. Patent No. 1,593,349). The Office Action asserts that "[i]t would have been obvious to...provide blank holders ...with profiles to match that of the stamped sheet, following the suggestions of Nickerson, in order to securely locate the in-process sheet in the area of the stamping dies." This assertion and this rejection is traversed as they may apply to the amended claims.

In particular, in the ancient Nickerson patent, the strip is fed in the machine (page 1, righthand column, line 68) so as to first form the parts 25, 26 and 27 (see the figure). That is, in this first embossing, the two extremities 27 are formed as a the central part 25, 26.

There is no suggestion is Nickinson to have the AR (rear) part 20 enlarged towards the rear with a rounded shape.

The rounded shape is required to ease the deformation of the metal and avoid micro-cracks and similar defects. Those defects cannot be avoided in Nickinson where there is an angular line between each of the extremities 27 and the central part 25, 26.

Additionally, Nickinson uses two separate and successive steps in two different, successive, stamping or embossing devices.

The presently claimed invention only uses one embossing press, and, due to the special shape of the part 20, is able to feed the strip continuously, each embossing by the ONE press forming a recess, after which the strip is moved by the distance necessary to emboss the next recess. The core of the presently claimed invention lies in the fact that the very special "rounded" and "enlarged" shape of the part 20 allows the embossings to be "prepared" before the embossing action, so that they can be very close to each other (as required for example when forming a sitting row for underground, etc.) without the interval between two embossements showing any defect or micro defect such as cracks.

Nickinson obviously does not address this kind of very specific technical problem.

The Office Action asserts that Nickinson discloses a "sequentially stamped strip." Such a sequentially stamped strip is not comparable to the presently claimed invention.

The presently claimed invention uses one embossing press with a very special shape so as to sequentially form a series of recesses or embossements. This is a successive repetition of the same operation.

Nickinson uses two "sequential" steps which are different with the two sequential presses being different, and performing different operations. Additionally, when the

stiffener article is produced by the TWO-STEPS operation in TWO different presses, it is REMOVED. There is no "series" of stampings as in the present invention where one can perform, on the same strip 2, 4, 6, 8, ... Identical and very close embossments with no defect in the tiny interval between two adjacent recesses.

Applicants respectfully submit that Nickerson does not teach or suggest the special shape of the presently claimed inventive machine, which leads to quite valuable results in the considered industry.

Thus, for at least the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectively required.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below to schedule a personal or telephone interview to discuss any remaining issues.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 01-2300, making reference to Attorney Docket No. 024118-00011.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert K. Carpenter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Carpenter" clearly distinguishable. It is written above a horizontal line.

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Enclosure: Petition for Extension of Time